

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON COLONIAL INDUSTRIES.

THE Joint Committee appointed to consider what steps, if any, should be taken to ascertain and develop the producing and manufacturing resources of the Colony, report that they have mainly confined their inquiries to the following subjects :—

Development of Coal Fields of the Colony.

Iron Deposits.

Beetroot Sugar.

Woollen Manufactures.

Paper Manufacture.

Sericulture.

Flax.

Timber.

Vienna Exhibition.

Geological Department.

Coal Fields.

Your Committee have taken a large amount of evidence on the present condition and prospects of the various known coal fields of the Colony, more particularly the Kawa Kawa, the Brunner, the Mount Rochfort and Ngakawau, and the Waikato Coal Fields. They find, with reference to the Kawa Kawa Mine, that the working of this mine has been suspended for two reasons,—the occurrence of a fault and the flooding of the present workings, and the fact that the construction of the proposed railway has been suspended till it is ascertained reliably that the profitable production can be continued on a large scale over a number of years.

The Committee recommend that a moderate amount of assistance should be afforded in the shape of a money grant to procure practical evidence on the subject above alluded to by boring.

The Brunner Mine.—Your Committee find that until the railway is made to the port of shipment, this mine must continue in the unsatisfactory state it is now in, and they recommend that the earliest steps should be taken to construct the proposed railway, and also that further exploration should be made to ascertain the amount of coal that is likely can be carried over this railway at a profit.

The Mount Rochfort and Ngakawau Mine.—Your Committee have satisfactory evidence that the coal in this district is fully equal in quality to that of the Brunner. They recommend that in this case also further explorations be made before any considerable expenditure is incurred in improving means of shipment, as it appears at present doubtful whether it would be expedient to adopt Westport or the Ngakawau River as the place of export.

With regard to other coal fields, your Committee recommend generally that wherever there is reason to believe that good coal seams exist, practical exploration as to the value and extent of these seams should be made as soon as the Government find it possible. The evidence taken by your Committee on this subject leads them to the belief that New Zealand ought, in a very short time, to supply its own wants and also become an exporter of coal.

Iron.

Your Committee have received sufficient evidence to convince them that payable iron stone and ore exists in various parts of the Colony; and in view of the great increase of price of manufactured iron in Europe, and the prospect of high prices, together with a constantly increasing demand continuing, they consider that they are fully justified in recommending that a bonus be offered of £5,000 on the production of 1,000 tons of pig iron of marketable quality, in quantities of not less than 100 tons, and under such regulations as may appear necessary to the Government to insure the permanent establishment of the industry.

The Committee also recommend that the bonus which the Committee of last year proposed of £1,000 for the production of the first 100 tons of steel from the Taranaki iron sand should be continued.

Beetroot Sugar.

Your Committee, whilst recognizing the valuable efforts made by Mr. Krull, the Consul of the German Empire, towards the establishment of a company to manufacture beetroot sugar in this Colony, regret to find that there is no probability of such a company being established at an early date; but they repeat the recommendation of the Joint Committee of last year, that a bonus of £2,000 be offered for the production of the first 250 tons of sugar produced from beetroot manufactured within the Colony.

In compliance with the recommendation of the Committee of last year, a quantity of seed of the best varieties of sugar beet has been procured from Germany, through Mr. Krull, and distributed in different districts of the Colony, with a view of testing the capability of those districts to grow beetroot of a quality sufficiently good to enable the production of sugar from this root to be profitably carried on.

Manufacture of Woollen Goods.

Your Committee have had their attention drawn to the several samples of manufactured woollen goods from the manufactory recently established at Mossgiel, Otago, by Messrs. Burns and Company, and consider it a source of much congratulation to the Colony that this industry is now thoroughly established. They think it right to draw attention to the fact that, in the case of Otago, this success